

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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R 171140Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7711

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION UN

USDOCOSOUTH

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 1783

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV PINT CY

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS

SUMMARY: IN WIDE RANGING DISCUSSION WITH AMBASSADOR YESTERDAY, MAKARIOS (A) CONFIRMED HIS OPPOSITION TO RECOMMENDED PLEDISCITE ON INDEPENDENCE VS. DOUBLE ENOSIS; (B) EVADED ANY FORECAST OF POSSIBLE AGREEMENT IN INTERCOMMUNAL NEGOTIATIONS; (C) CALCULATED THAT GRIVAS HAS UNDERMINED OWN SUPPORT BY REFULAS GO TO ATHENS FOR TALKS; (D) ACKNOWLEDGED INFORMING GOG OF PRO GRIVAS GREEK OFFICERS IN NATIONAL GUARD, AND (E) EXPRESSED DESIRE TO ATTEND ALGIERS NON ALIGNED CONFERENCE, BUT (F) DISAVOWED ANY INTENTION TO RAISE CYPRUS PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

1. MEETING IN ARCHBISHOPRIC PALACE, MAKARIOS EXPLAINED THAT HIS WILLINGNESS GO TO ATHENS AS RECOMMENDED IN "ELEFTHEROS COSMOS" PROPOSAL TO RESOLVE INNER GREEK TURMOIL DID NOT IMPLY ACCEPTANCE OF INDEPENDENCE VS DOUBLE-ENOSIS REFERENDUM SUGGESTION (NICOSIA 1727). WHAT HE ENVISIONED IN ATHENS WAS PALAVER INVOLVING HIMSELF, GRIVAS AND GOC AUTHORITY.

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TIES AS DIRECTED TOWARD A STATEMENT OF RECORD WHICH WOULD END

INNER GREEK TURMOIL, IMPLYING THIS WOULD PROVIDE MEANS FOR NEUTRALIZING GRIVAS AND PREVENTING HIS RETURN TO CYPRUS. MAKARIOS ARGUED THERE IS NO NEED TO SUBMIT SUCH "NARROWLY" DRAWN REFERENDUM AS ABOVE TO PEOPLE AT TIME INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS STILL IN PROGRESS-THAT TIME FOR A VOTE WOULD ARISE AS AND WHEN SETTLEMENT ACHIEVED. THEN, HE SAID, THE TERMS OF AGREEMENT WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO PEOPLE AND THAT THIS WOULD CONSTITUTE A "PROPER" VOTE. THIS, COMBINED WITH NO EVIDENCE OF ATHENS SUPPORT FOR PROPOSAL AND GRIVAS NON INTEREST, LAYS CREPE COMPLETELY OVER EC INITIATIVE. DESPITE PROBING, ARCH-BISHOP GAVE NO HINT THAT NICOSIA HAD ANY HAND IN INSPIRING INITIATIVE, AS EARLIER SUSPECTED, NOR DID HE APPEAR TO THINK THAT THERE WAS ANY ENTHUSIASM AT ALL IN ATHENS FOR IT. THUS IT BECOMES ANOTHER FOOTNOTE IN THE ISLANDS POLITICAL HISTORY.

2. DWELLING AT GREAT LENGTH WITH EMOTION AND ANECDOTE ON GRIVAS (SEPTTEL), MAKARIOS DENOUNCED GENERAL AS "COMMON CRIMINAL" FOR KIDNAPPING MINJUSTICE AND INDISCRIMINATE BOMBINGS. HE DECLARED THAT GRIVAS COULD NOT MUSTER SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO EFFECT OVERTHROW OF GOVERNMENT AS ALLEGED IN STILL QUESTIONABLE CHARGES OF "APOLLO" PLAN. ASKED WHAT THEN WAS GENERALS ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE, HE RESPONDED IMMEDIATELY, "TO ELIMINATE ME." TO FURTHER QUESTION, HE ADMITTED THAT GOVT IS PRESENTLY UNAWARE OF GRIVAS WHEREABOUTS BUT WILL NOT HESITATE TO ARREST HIM, ADDING ROGUISHLY THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE CAPTURE EFFECTED BY GREEK OFFICERS ON NATIONAL GUARD. SURPRISINGLY, ARCHBISHOP ADMITTED "REGRET" THAT GRIVAS HAD NOT BEEN TAKEN WHEN HIS WHEREABOUTS WERE EARLIER KNOWN, THUS CONFIRMING GENERAL ASSUMPTION HERE THAT GOVT LAST SPRING DID NOT WANT "MARTYR" ON ITS HANDS, BUT MAKING CLEAR THAT GOVT VIEW HAS CHANGED. REPEATING HIS WILLINGNESS TO GO TO ATHENS, MAKARIOS DOES NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY GRIVAS STILL MIGHT BRING HIMSELF TO ACCEPT. MEANWHILE, HE ACKNOWLEDGED IGNORANCE OF WHAT GENERALS NEXT ACTION MIGHT BE. THROUGHOUT ARCHBISHOP SHOWED CONFIDENCE OF PLAYER HOLDING THE STRONG SUIT.

3. DISCUSSING NATIONAL GUARD, MAKARIOS CONFIRMED REPORT HE HAD GIVEN GREEK AMB LIST OF PRO GRIVAS GREEK OFFICERS FOR TRANSMITTAL TO ATHENS, EMPHASIZING HE HAD ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS BEEN "URGED" TO DO SO AT BEHEST OF PAPADOPOULOS. HE CLEARLY ASSUMED CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT ATHENS WILL TAKE STEPS TO REMOVE THE MORE DISLOYAL AND, WITHOUT ASSESSING ANY PARTICULAR BLAME TO DEPARTING COMMANDER OF GUARD, HOPES FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE UNDER NEW COMMANDER WHO ARRIVED FEW DAYS AGO. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION HOW TO DESCRIBE PRESENT STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN NICOSIA AND ATHENS, HE SAID SIMPLY "GOOD."

4. FINALLY, MAKARIOS PULLED RUG FROM UNDER FOREIGN OFFICE

DESIRE TO FOCUS NON ALIGNED CONFERENCE ON CYPRUS PROBLEM. EXPRESSING HOPE THAT CONDITIONS HERE WILL PERMIT HIM TO ATTEND (AND REGRET HE WAS FORCED TO MISS COMMONWEALTH MEETING), HE ALLOWED THAT INTRODUCTION CYPRUS ISSUE MIGHT PROVE CONTENTIOUS FOR SOME PARTICIPANTS. AT LUSAKA, HE EXPLAINED, BOTH LIBYA AND TO LESSER DEGREE SUDAN ARGUED OVER STATEMENT ENDORSING LITANY ON CYPRUS AND HE WISHED TO SEE NO REPEAT OF ARGUMENT. IF INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS WERE NOT UNDERWAY THERE MIGHT BE SOME POINT TO UNDERTAKING, BUT PRINCIPLE HAD BEEN ULTIMATELY RECORDED THERE AND EARLIER AT CAIRO MEETING AND THAT IS SATISFACTION ENOUGH, HE INDICATED. FROM THIS IT APPEARS SAFE ASSUMPTION THAT ARCHBISHOP WILL SEEK TO PLAY ROLE ABOVE NARROW DISPUTES OF CYPRUS PROBLEM THERE ADDRESSING HIMSELF TO BROADER INTERNATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS WHICH CONFERENCE WILL PRESUME TO DEAL WITH.

COMMENT: ATMOSPHERE THROUGHOUT WAS RELAXED AS ARCHBISHOP EXUDED AIR OF CONFIDENCE IN ALL TOPICS DISCUSSED. HIS DEMEANOR SUGGESTED NOTHING SO MUCH AS A MAN WHO HAS A VARIETY COMPLEX ISSUES ON THE TABLE BUT SATISFIED THAT HE HOLDS THE HIGH CARDS AND THAT THE WEAK HANDS ARE PLAYING THEMSELVES OUT. GOOD GAMBLER THAT HE IS, THOUGH, HE IS NOT PREPARED TO PLACE HIS FINAL BET, YET SEES NO MANIFEST NEED FOR FURTHER DEAL. WHILE ESCHEWING ANY FORECAST ON OUTCOME OF INTERCOMMUNAL NEGOTIATIONS, IT IS THIS ISSUE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF AN AGREEMENT THAT COULD WIN A WIDE VOTE OF SUPPORT THAT HE IS AWAITING. SUCH AN OUTCOME WOULD FILL OUT HIS HAND AND OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF A PEACEFUL CYPRUS. IN TURN, THIS WOULD PERMIT HIM TO PURSUE THAT BROADER INTERNATIONAL STAGE WHICH HE HAS ALWAYS FOUND ALLURING.

AS WITH ALL MATTERS IN CYPRUS ONE HASTENS TO ADD THE CAVEAT THAT ALL THIS COULD CHANGE AS A RESULT OF DEVELOPMENTS
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THAT NEITHER THE PROTAGONISTS NOR OBSERVERS PRESENTLY SEE.
THUS OUR SAFEST BET REMAINS A HEDGED BIT.
MC CLOSKEY

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